

Judge Peggy Walker, Juvenile Court of Douglas County, will take the helm of the National Council for Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ) this summer. No stranger to community involvement and state and national work, Judge Walker took some time to discuss her achievements as a juvenile court judge and her ongoing work.

Georgia Courts Journal: Where did you grow up?



Juvenile Court Judge
Peggy Walker

Judge Walker: I was born in West Virginia and moved to the City of Atlanta when I was in elementary school. We moved to East Point when I began high school. I graduated from Fulton County's Headland High School with honors and received a partial teacher's scholarship for undergraduate school at Georgia College's Honors Program.

GCJ: What is your educational background?

Judge Walker: I graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree from Georgia College with honors. I taught school in Clayton and Fulton Counties before enrolling in the first class at Georgia State University's College of Law and earned my JD degree in 1986.

GCJ: Why did you become a juvenile judge?

Judge Walker: I went to Juvenile Court as a volunteer because I was new to the community and needed to build a client base. I stayed because I had a talent for representing children and parents. My volunteer work became my career because I loved the children and families and wanted to assist in solving problems for better outcomes for them.

GCJ: Who has influenced your career as a judge?

Judge Walker: Justice Harris Hines has inspired me to devote the remainder of my career to court improvement for families and children. He continues to encourage me and support me as I move into this national position as President of National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges.

Former Chief Justice Carol Hunstein asked me to bring Zero To Three Court Teams to Georgia. Becoming a Zero To Three Fellow gave me the best education on helping infants and toddlers in the legal system.

Former Chief Justice Leah Sears also continues to support my National Council work on

strengthening families and bringing diversity to our organization and the judiciary.

I also learned so much from retired Superior Court Judge Robert J. Castellani who hired me for my first job as a lawyer, serving as his law clerk.

Superior Court Judges Robert J. James, David T. Emerson and William “Beau” McClain have continued to support my work at the local, state and national levels making this opportunity possible.

GCJ: What do you feel is your most significant achievement as a judge?

Judge Walker: My most significant achievement as a Judge was chairing the Georgia Commission on Family Violence for two years and leading efforts to write a comprehensive plan to end family violence in Georgia. We continue to make progress with implementation of the plan with the support, assistance and endorsement of the Administrative Office of the Courts under the leadership of Marla Moore and Greg Loughlin who serves as Director of the Commission.

GCJ: What local community organizations are you involved in?

Judge Walker: I have been a member of Rotary Club of Douglas County for more than twenty years. I received an award for leadership from the Rotary Club of East Point when I graduated from high school so it means a great deal to me to give back to Rotary through service in Douglas County, our district and the world. I also am very active in Douglas CORE, our Family Connections collaborative.

GCJ: Georgia juvenile judges are very active on a national scale. Is there a reason for that?



Judge Walker: Yes, Georgia has a long history of service to NCJFCJ. The late Judge Romae Powell from Fulton County, the late Judge Aaron Cohn of Muscogee County and the Honorable Michael Key from Troup County served as President of National Council.

When I joined the Council of Juvenile Court Judges in 1993, Judge Cohn, Judge Martha Glaze and Judge Bert Crane encouraged me to become involved in Committee work of NCJFCJ in preparation for becoming a Trustee and Officer.

Georgia has one of the largest memberships in the NCJFCJ. Our goal is to always have at least one member as a Trustee or Officer. Right now we have three: Judge Warner Kennon, Judge Steve Teske and me. I became a member in 1993 as Associate Judge and began committee work in 1998 when I was appointed as Judge. I served six years as a Trustee and three years as an officer. I will serve two more years, one as President and one as Past President.

GCJ: Do you have any specific plans you would like to implement during your year as

president of NCJFC?

Judge Walker: As President of National Council, I will continue to work on reauthorization of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act to continue to improve access to justice, judicial education and judicial leadership in working for better outcomes for children and families particularly those who have experienced complex trauma. I am also working on national policies for prevention of violence and fetal alcohol issues.